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AUTHOR Kreiling, Albert
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ABSTRACT

Two leading black newspapers were very outspoken during the black American's struggle for equality following the Civil War of the 1860s. The Chicago-based "Conservator" and "Appeal" actively encouraged blacks to enter the nationwide power struggle among warring interests on their own behalf, and on a cultural level they attempted to elevate the race above the increasingly disappointing Republican party as a symbol of moral legitimacy. Staunchly defending bourgeois morality and propriety, the editors of both papers exemplified a secular piety, a return to morality through the creation of a secular culture rather than a return to the other-worldly religion of the previous generation. With the rise of racial political consciousness, black newspapers leaned toward reporting black news and away from editorial commentary, as illustrated by continued coverage of the lynchings and other injustices against blacks in the South. The promotion of a respectable middle-class life style and a concern about home life, education, and standards of conduct and morality were characteristic concerns of the rising coterie of black women journalists. As the small crusading newspapers were soon overshadowed by the mass press, their plans for the race were realized later by the professional politicians and advancement workers. The papers provided the rhetorical models to weld black Americans into a group with shared racial allegiance. (HTH)

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BLACK EDITORS' RESPONSES TO POWER AND PROPAGANDA

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By Albert Kreiling
Fordham University

Mass Communication Interest Group
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In urban black communities in the late nineteenth century, educated young persons, many of them recent migrants, were assuming increasing prominence and were introducing into the expanding world of urban black life new political programs, ideas for racial betterment, social customs, and, more broadly, styles of life. Many of their spokesmen and leaders, whom I shall call the Afro-American Agitators, were professionals and journalists, and many of the new black newspapers appearing were important vehicles for the promulgation of their political programs, racial ideologies, and life styles in the making.

The Afro-American Agitators were generally amateurs at journalism, politics, and racial advancement work. In the twentieth century, their sporadic attempts to organize racial protection leagues were overshadowed by the continuous efforts of the NAACP with its professional staff; their occasional entry into political races gave way to the full-time efforts of professional black politicians with ties to urban political machines; and their small newspapers, each put out by a handful of persons and circulated to no more than a few

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thousand readers, were eclipsed by the mass commercial black press with its greater advertising revenues, its professional staffs, and its large nationwide circulations. In each of these areas, however, the Afro-American Agitators of the 1880's and 1890's were introducing ideas, themes, and preoccupations that would animate black life in much of the twentieth century. In a sense, they were pioneers in devising urban-based, progressive life styles for twentieth-century middle-class black life.

I have studied the black journalism of the late nineteenth century most closely in Chicago. The city was a leading center--perhaps the leading center--for the development of the black press in the period, as it would continue to be in the twentieth century with the successes of the Chicago Defender and the Johnson Publishing Company. By the 1890's, Chicago was being called "the graveyard of Negro journalism," for more than 40 publications, most of them short lived, had appeared by 1900. I have described elsewhere the city's black journalists and publications of the period.[1] In the present paper, I want to concentrate upon analyzing the content and themes of the publications to show how they expressed the styles of life and the forms of consciousness developing among urban middle-class blacks. I shall draw mainly upon the city's two leading newspapers, the Conservator and the Appeal.

The principal founder of the Conservator, started in 1878, was Ferdinand L. Barnett. Barnett was one of the most active in civic and political affairs of a rising group of young black attorneys, as well as a leader in the social life of a wider circle of educated young blacks, many of them professionals, rising in the life of the community in the 1870's and 1880's. Often ridiculing the older leaders of the small social elite, Barnett and other professionals of his generation became leaders of the elite by the turn of the century, but in so doing they wrought changes in its values, ideology, and style of life.[2]

In his early days, Barnett was an outspoken critic of the Republican Party, but he was always a Republican and repeatedly headed the party's Chicago office for efforts aimed at blacks in national campaigns. He led an early drive to gain a black alderman, was named

the first black assistant state's attorney in 1896, and narrowly lost a race for municipal judge in 1906. Because of the demands of his law practice, Barnett was repeatedly in and out of the editor's seat at the Conservator, but he held the editorship or influenced the paper's policies most of the time until the mid-nineties.[3]

Barnett's first wife, Mary Graham Barnett, who for a time had charge of the Conservator's print shop, died in 1889, and in 1895 Barnett married Ida B. Wells, who had written for the paper during previous stays in Chicago and now settled in the city and assumed the editorship. An outspoken critic of injustices to her race, Miss Wells had been a leading columnist in black newspapers in the 1880's and later had been editor of the Memphis Free Speech. The paper was forcibly suspended by whites indignant at an editorial in which she challenged the excuse frequently made for lynchings as punishment for rape. Subsequently, she had assumed the role of militant crusader against lynchings, publishing pamphlets to expose the crime, touring the country to give lectures and organize anti-lynching leagues, and twice traveling to England to arouse support for the cause. Although she did not become a Chicagoan until the 1890's, some of her earlier writings will be included in the analysis here since they exemplify the spirit of the rising black middle class.[4]

The Conservator's leading competitor was the Adams brothers' Appeal. John Quincy and Cyrus Field Adams had started the Louisville Bulletin in 1879 but sold it in 1885. As the sons of a noted southern minister and educator, the brothers were among the "Talented Tenth" who came North after Reconstruction. In 1887, John Adams became editor and principal owner of the Appeal, with headquarters in St. Paul, and set out to make it a national paper by establishing offices to gather news and promote sales in several cities. The most successful operation was in Chicago, where Cyrus Adams opened an office in 1888, and for several years the Appeal was billed as a joint St. Paul-Chicago publication.[5]

Prior to the Civil War, Chicago was an Abolitionist stronghold, and blacks were participants in anti-slavery activities. In the small black community, churches and lodges were the chief institutions and centers of social life. These institutions, as well as a social

structure headed by an elite, emerged before the war and continued intact for some time afterward. The elite included the owners of service trades for whites, as well as head waiters, porters, and barbers, in a group that resembled the elites of other cities. As elsewhere, ministers and fraternal leaders were important figures in the life of the community. In politics, the small elites in Chicago and elsewhere looked to the Republican Party as a moral force and protector, clung to the legacy of the Abolitionist ideology, and took as political leaders such black Republican politicians as Frederick Douglass.[6]

Following Reconstruction, blacks became increasingly conscious of the waning enthusiasm of the Republicans for the cause of black rights, coupled with the rising tide of hostility toward blacks in the South. Older political leaders like Douglass typically remained faithful, if restive Republicans. A second group of black politicians turned to the Democrats, most notably in the election of 1884, when several prominent "Negrowumps" joined the disaffected white Republican Mugwumps who rallied around Grover Cleveland. Increasingly visible, however, was a third and typically younger group of Afro-American Agitators like Barnett and the Adams brothers, who talked of steering an independent political course instead of slavishly supporting a party and called for self-help instead of dependence upon whites to advance the fortunes of the race. Historians have generally interpreted the ideas of the Afro-American Agitators as political strategies called forth by white hostility and the Republicans' seeming desertion of the race. However, as Leslie Fishel recognized, the debate among black politicians in the 1880's also reflected a generational clash as the young Afro-American Agitators challenged the leadership of their elders.[7]

The Afro-American Agitators repeatedly attacked older black politicians, mainly for advancing their own careers instead of serving the race or for their naive trust in the good will and paternalism of the Republican Party. In the Free Speech, Ida Wells charged:

> . . . "our leaders" make no demands on the country to protect us. . . . A few big offices and the control of a little

> Federal patronage is not sufficient recompense for the lives lost, the blood shed and the rights denied the race.[8]

The Free Speech was at the center of heated controversy in black papers across the country when it became one of the leaders in an attack on the black United States Senator from Mississippi, Blanche K. Bruce. The paper asked:

> What can history say of our Senator Bruce, save that he held the chair of a Senator for six years, drew his salary and left others to champion the Negro's cause in the Senate Chamber.[9]

The Conservator ridiculed pompous leaders who did little more than promote their own reputations, and repeatedly attacked as unproductive the national conventions that black politicians had been holding for decades.[10] The paper assailed J. Milton Turner for cowardice in bowing to the will of the party when it snubbed him and reminded Turner of his duty to forcefully represent the race.[11] The Conservator was generally kinder than some of the militant papers to the venerable Frederick Douglass, but joined in the attack on him when he accepted a post from the Harrison Administration while remaining silent about its slights to the race.[12]

For a time in the mid-eighties, the Conservator was in the hands of one of the older leaders, Alex Clark, a former barber, Masonic officer who made the rounds of lodges throughout the Midwest, and long-time Republican politician.[13] In the Conservator's columns, Clark was continually critical of the Republicans and outspokenly assailed injustices to the race. However, he could see no possible course for blacks except to cling to the party and to "emulate the spirit and faith" of its bygone leaders. He denounced signs of a turn away from the party and instead advocated a fight within the party to return it to its former principles. Clark was frequently at odds with the young militants, and his views expressed in the Conservator drew impetuous rejoinders from the leading militant, T. Thomas Fortune of the New York Freeman, who called him a "fossil." Another young journalist called Clark a "gizzard-footed Republican" and one of the "old-timers" who "have little patience with these late day heretics" who advocated political independence or turned to the

Democrats.[14]

As industrialists displaced Abolitionists in Republican Party councils, the young militants felt that the party had deserted the race and perceived it in a new light, as an instrument of power rather than morality, acting out of self-interest instead of principles, like the other foreboding power blocs of the industrial age. The Republicans were using blacks as a tool for their own ends, Ida Wells charged, and "care no more for the Negro than the Democrats do."[15] Back in Barnett's hands after Clark's brief editorship, the Conservator launched a campaign against the party's support for a high tariff to protect skilled labor in the 1888 campaign. "Why should the colored voter be expected to enthuse over any talk of protecting skilled labor? We have no skilled labor nor can we have any," one editorial declared.[16]

Both the Conservator and the Appeal avowed their continued loyalty to Republican principles but repeatedly complained of the party's departure from them. The Conservator said:

> We advocate Republican principles, and as long as that party is true to its professions, we are true to the party, but when it foresakes its principles it loses our support.[17]

The Appeal and the Conservator never bolted the party, but they were sometimes friendly to individual Democrats. The Conservator had kind words for a black Democratic editor and for a convention of black Democrats. The paper was consistently friendly to Chicago Democratic Mayor Carter Harrison, "Our Carter," who was widely regarded as a "friend of the race" in the black community.[18]

Facing a land of hostile power blocs, John Adams and Ferdinand Barnett, like numerous other blacks, talked of "self-help" and "independence" to advance the race. "The future of the Colored brother," Adams wrote, "depends largely upon his own course."[19] Barnett thought that the future of the race "will be as we make it." On a tactical level, the militants were urging the race to enter the nationwide power struggle among warring interests in its own behalf, while on a cultural level they were attempting to elevate the race above the party as a symbol of moral legitimacy. In response to their

perception that the power blocs of the industrial age acted out of self-interest, the Afro-American Agitators called upon blacks to act out of self-interest as well, in place of "sentimental" loyalty to the Republicans.

Barnett favored concerted action among blacks to advance their own condition and to force their demands upon the white power structure. "White people grant us few privileges voluntarily. We must wage continued warfare for our rights," he declared.[20] The Conservator repeatedly urged blacks to "look out for number one" and to only vote for individual candidates who were friendly to the race. "White Republicans 'vote straight,' 'scratch' or support independent nominees, as their interests dictate," the paper observed. "The colored Republicans must do the same."[21] In an enunciation of its own stand, the paper said:

> There are those who are for party first and our race next. With such persons we cannot agree. With us it is race first, then party.[22]

Like the black militants of a more recent period, the Afro-American Agitators wanted black political leaders in place of paternalistic whites acting as guardians of the race. The Conservator declared:

> The political leaders do not want us to play the part of a significant figure, but to act only [as] a cipher--always worthless unless combined with some white man.
>
> Of this we are tired and disgusted. We want leaders of our own, and we demand that the dominant party shall bestow our representative positions so that our prominent men may have absolute strength of themselves in their localities.[23]

If the race would act independently as a unified bloc, the Afro-American Agitators believed, it would hold the balance of power between the parties and could force them to accede to its demands. "We are an important factor in the body politic, and we know it," the Conservator proclaimed.[24] The paper urged the race to exercise "the influence we are known to possess," and said that it looked forward to "the time when both parties will seek [the Negro's] influence and support."[25] Following the 1890 elections, the Appeal said that one reason the Republicans had made a poor showing was their failure to cultivate northern black voters.[26]

The habit of assessing politics from the standpoint of the race as a nationwide unit with common interests and concerted political strength has persisted long after the generation of the Afro-American Agitators. But to them belongs much of the responsibility for introducing the perspective into the fabric of black life. Scholars have charged that, with their focus upon racial politics, they ignored the larger social and economic currents of their time. Moreover, like later black journalists, they sometimes overestimated the importance of the black vote. The Appeal once defiantly declared:

> Seven millions of people with right and justice upon their side, can do more damage to the Republican party than the recent breaking of the dam did to persons and property in the Conemaugh valley.[27]

The Afro-American Agitators' calls for political independence reflected the rising generation's assertion of a new social style as much as a set of political tactics. Their political stance was a symbol of an ideal of forceful, race-proud manhood. It signified a style of life that gave an identity to youths who reached maturity in an uncertain age. The young militants ridiculed their elders for credulity, passivity, and a failure to think for themselves, which the rebels saw as the legacy of slavery perpetuated in freedom, but now to be cast aside by a new generation asserting its manhood and thinking for itself. "Let us break away from the duplicity and cowardness of to-day and show ourselves thinking freemen," the Conservator urged.[28] In another paean to the spirit of independence, the paper proclaimed:

> The Negro, like every other citizen, must show his manhood. Independence engenders respect. Just so long as the colored voters can be counted as so many sheep, just so long will he be to his enemies an object of contempt and to his friends an object of commiseration.[29]

As part of the show of manhood, the Afro-American Agitators occasionally applauded the idea of violent retaliation against the rising tide of violence directed at blacks in the South. Whites will not respect the black man, the Conservator said, "till he makes a blow for himself." When blacks fired shotguns on whites as they approached a black guard post organized for self-protection in

Galveston, the paper remarked:

> It is about time that Southern colored people were giving officious meddlers to understand that they must attend to their own business or act as targets. A few such lessons will be wholesome.[30]

Although the Afro-American Agitators were devising a social style and an ideology that were specifically racial, at the same time they bore similarities to the educated upper-middle-class white professionals and Progressives on the urban scene, who were distancing themselves from the common man and from their less educated elders in a bid for elitist leadership. Ferdinand and Ida Barnett, as well as some other Afro-American Agitators, later joined with white liberals in various Progressive civic-action programs.

In reflecting the assertion of a generational style as much as a political strategy, the Afro-American Agitators' political ideas exemplified the wider thrust of all of their activities. The youthful militants were not only making a bid for leadership, but also were self-consciously searching for and devising new forms of consciousness, models of conduct, and styles of life. Reaching maturity on the changing urban scene in the midst of industrialization, they felt more acutely than their elders the irrelevance of older models of conduct in a changing world.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, blacks like other groups witnessed numerous and sudden symbols of change in the city and on the national scene, which aroused both excitement with the new and fear of threats to established ways. These developments were part of far more sweeping cultural dislocations, which on the heels of the Civil War resulted in varied reactions of strife, fear, protest, and self-consciousness among Americans. The post-Civil War decades marked what Jay Martin called "the transition between the old and new Americas."[31] The burgeoning symbolism of an urban-industrial society shattered familiar expectations, frames of reference, and models of conduct, leaving in their wake widespread cultural ambiguity.

The rebuilding of Chicago after the fire of 1871 symbolized the sudden appearance of a radically different cultural world. Before

the fire, Chicago had been the Garden City, its culture dominated by the New England Yankees who had settled it. On the ashes of the Garden City appeared a new Phoenix City, in which the strange ideas and customs of German socialists and a host of other groups challenged the hegemony of Yankee Puritanism.[32] A new imagery that glorified commerce, industry, enterprise, and machine technology arose in the Phoenix City. At the same time, however, the new diversity and increased complexity of the social landscape fostered widespread anxiety, as it shattered familiar cultural frames of reference. Consequently, Neil Harris noted, "If any one term summed up the cultural life of this era, it was self-consciousness."[33] Faced with this self-consciousness more than their elders who clung to traditional ways, the Afro-American Agitators were among the numerous groups of the time engaged in a process of cultural reconstruction of identities, models of conduct, and frames of consciousness.

Central in the outlook of the Afro-American Agitators and numerous other anxious Americans was the perception that the rule of principles and morality had lost sway in the land, eclipsed by naked power struggles waged for self-interest by the rising power blocs and institutions of the industrial age. The Afro-American Agitators' new view of the Republican Party exemplified this pattern of perception. Samuel P. Hays and H. Wayne Morgan have characterized the late nineteenth century as a time of increasingly visible concentrations of power in business and politics.[34] With these developments came a new body of imagery that glorified naked power. Chicago's novelists and journalists, Hugh Duncan noted, recast their images of the urban drama as a struggle for power.[35]

The newly pervasive imagery of industrialism and power excited widespread revulsion, for it presaged a threat to individualism and moral values. The image of a civilization sundered by naked power was widely shared by Americans, among them the Afro-American Agitators, who took lynchings, American actions in the Philippines, and other events as symbolic of the demise of morality. To blacks, another symbol of the demise of morality was the dwindling number of white "friends of the race." Both the Conservator and the Appeal occasionally noted with sadness the death of one more of the last of

the Abolitionists. The Appeal's editorials frequently expressed John Adams' vision of doom and decadence in a society losing its moral bearings. "In a land riven by commercialism," Adams wrote, "the barons are drawing the poor man to the wall in order to swell the profits of the Eastern manufacturers, and to enable the female Goulds to indulge in $600 dresses."[36] Adams often criticized white Christian churches for their failure to preserve moral values, once writing:

> Under the influence of the spirit of commercialism, the nation has broken loose from its religious moorings. This accounts for the prevalence of all forms of evil, lynching, the white slave traffic, adulteration of foods and drugs and frequent divorces. The church has lost its repressive power and seems to every day become more tolerant of many forms of evil.[37]

The anxiety of the age was especially acute among groups like blacks, who felt unattached to the increasingly dominant power blocs, and, like various others, blacks were coming to feel a dispossessed group. One reaction was the Afro-American Agitators' heightened identification with the racial group. The intensification of a racial identity exemplified a common pattern, for, as Harris noted, many Americans of the time sought escape into the certainty and security of group identities.[38] The increased visibility of the expanded immigrant communities and other groups on the urban scene contributed to the Afro-American Agitators' heightened allegiance to their own group. In a discussion of the gains of blacks in the 1888 elections, the Conservator referred to the gains and losses of "other nationalities" as well.[39] Thus the Afro-American Agitators' notion of independent political action in the interest of the race reflected both a political strategy and a new form of identity.

Although the Afro-American Agitators deplored the demise of morality associated with the weakened influence of the church, they were pioneers and advocates of secularization. They wanted a rise of secular leaders for the race in place of the ministers and fraternal leaders so conspicuous among their parents' generation, and they sought a return to morality through the creation of a secular culture rather than a return to other-worldly religion. The Barnetts and the Adams brothers exemplified the Afro-American Agitators' spirit, in

what might be called a life style of "secular piety." They were staunch defenders of bourgeois morality and propriety, but ridiculed the excessive attachment of their elders to other-worldly religious ideas and to the rituals and regalia of churches and fraternal orders.

Presaging a long history of middle-class revulsion toward lower-class superstition, other-worldliness, and demonstrative religious services, the Conservator condemned emotional appeals from the pulpit. When a visiting pastor tried these tactics, the paper declared, "Chicago audiences are not given to such backwoods demonstrations."[40] John Adams repeatedly prompted his readers to turn their attention from heaven to this world. "What the race needs," he declared, "is practical leadership; something of a more material nature and less spiritual."[41] The Appeal condemned various church customs and looked upon the ignorant preacher as a major symbol of lower-class backwardness:

> If there has been more than any other contributory cause in retarding the race's progress, both in its intellect and the acquiring of wealth, that personage has been the 'nigger' preacher.[42]

The Barnetts later were enthusiastic supporters of Reverdy Ransom's brand of social-action religion, which appeared on the scene in the black community when Ransom founded the Institutional Church in 1900. A few years later, Ida Barnett established a lighthouse to carry on social work, the Negro Fellowship League, and published a newspaper, the Fellowship Herald, in conjunction with it.

The turn to social-action religion was but one element in the broader effort of the Afro-American Agitators, so characteristic of modern populations, to forge a new life style and group mythology revolving around hopes and ideals for the future instead of traditions descended from the past. Ida Wells and her future husband exemplified this spirit. At the center of their hopes was a mythic ideal of "the race," for, as S. P. Fullinwider showed with the later group of activist Race Radicals, who included the Barnetts, many of them made a moral absolute out of the race in place of the older absolutes shattered in the broad wave of secularization.[43]

Ida Wells' conception of the race did not rest upon a vision

of a mythological racial past, but upon the promise of the black middle class in the present and the future. In an article on race pride, she surveyed the history of the race and concluded that it offered a paucity of traditional resources as a foundation for race pride, which would have to be built instead upon new ideals and aspirations.[44] She looked to the future, called for the renunciation of outmoded traditions, and heralded a nascent this-worldly racial ideal of a proud middle-class black identity in place of moot other-worldly absolutes or tarnished partisan promises. Similarly, Ferdinand Barnett wrote in an early article, "As we have no past and only a poor present, we must make a bright future."[45]

Thus the criticism of older leaders by Ida Wells and her youthful cohorts was not only a bid for power, but was wrapped up with their effort to ensconce independent secular racial ideals and identities in place of the ideals of their elders--the other-worldly visions held out by ministers and the moral authority ascribed to the Republican Party by black politicians descended from Abolitionist and Reconstruction times. In an article on "Broken Idols," Miss Wells stressed the need to reevaluate, discard, and reconstruct the assumptions and programs of black leaders in all regions of life--moral, social, intellectual, and political.[46] In her autobiography, she recalled her feeling that the ministers, though often "scholarly, saintly men," were failing to give the practical advice for living needed by the people. Representative of the powerful secularizing drive under way in the middle class, she attempted in her writings to provide "guidance in everyday life," written in "a plain, common-sense way."[47]

There were two paradoxes about the ideal of the race held by the Afro-American Agitators. One was that their envisaged life style and ideals for the race were largely drawn from upper-class white models. However, this observation--which was true of Ida B. Wells, who drew many of her ideals of character and conduct from white models--fails to note the way that this appropriation of customs can coexist, as it did in Miss Wells, with a powerful racial allegiance. Her intense identification with the race is no where more poignantly recorded than in an entry in her diary in which she likened her

people to the Israelites struggling to escape bondage, and wrote that she would like to "gather my race in my arms and fly far away with them."[48]

The second paradox was that the Afro-American Agitators identified, on an abstract level at least, with the race as a whole, for, as Miss Wells wrote, "it is the trend of the mass that is typical of race pride or dishonor."[49] This sentiment among middle-class blacks after the war, partly due to the turn to intensified group identifications with the cultural upheavals of industrialization, stood perceptibly in contrast to the images held by free blacks before the war, who could, as E. Franklin Frazier suggested, think of themselves as a group apart from the slaves.[50] Nevertheless, critics accused the Afro-American Agitators of elitism with some justification, for they looked to the Talented Tenth to assume the mantle of leadership and uplift the race. Miss Wells displayed a consistent tendency to draw a sharp line between the respectable and the disreputable. The elitism of the Afro-American Agitators matched that of the white liberals and Progressives whose spirit they shared.

Illustrating both the Afro-American Agitators' search for a secular morality and their desire to maintain bourgeois propriety in spite of their abandonment of other-worldly absolutes was the brief turn by the Conservator staff and a few other blacks to the Prohibition movement. The only salvation for southern blacks lay in the acquisition of temperance, morality, and ambition, the Conservator proclaimed. Moveover, the war against "rum and ruin" was not just a fight for political gain but "for humanity." "The prohibition question is the great moral issue of this, just as the anti-slavery question was the great moral issue of the last generation," declared one editorial.[51] These arguments illustrated how close the views of middle-class blacks were to those of middle-class whites likewise made uneasy by the social changes of the period. Numerous other blacks, including the editor of the Appeal, advocated temperance, but few became Prohibitionists. The Conservator soon left the Prohibition camp, for the obvious difficulty for blacks in supporting the Prohibitionists lay in their unfriendliness to blacks.[52]

Central in the developing secular mythos of the Afro-American

Agitators were the interlocked powers of politics and the press, and many of the editors conceived of their papers as weapons in the political arena. Looked at in one way, then, the cultural struggle going on in the black community was a bid for authority by the press and politicians against religious authority. In the Appeal and the Conservator, minor and remote political events were ofted noted and commented on from the standpoint of their impact upon the race. Thus the papers created a continuous nationwide political drama that revolved around the fortunes of the race as a collective political unit locked in combat with the white South and the other power blocs arrayed against it.

The fascination with politics reflected the rise of a political consciousness and the increasing importance of political rituals in black cultural life with secularization. As Jacques Ellul has argued, "homo politicus is by his very nature homo religiosus."[53] The Afro-American Agitators made a secular religion of politics, adopting as secular rituals such political acts as voting, making protests and appeals to the state for justice into "secular prayers," and seeking solutions to all frustrations in the symbolism of politics. Thus they became participants in a political arena in which man's political acts "spring from sources much more profound than ideology; they spring from his very participation and place in society."[54]

Indicative of the rise of a political consciousness was the "secular prayer" in which blacks appealed to the state, as a secular deity, for symbolic acknowledgment of the justice of their cause. In editorial campaigns for such legislation as "force bills" and anti-lynching laws, and in their demands for public pronouncements of outrage by politicians, the Conservator and other papers disclosed a mounting faith in symbolic governmental acts, which had the power to confer or deny status and legitimacy. Revealing another trend of modern American life, the Afro-American Agitators looked to the federal government as their protector against unfriendly state and local governments. In an evaluation of a presidential message, the Conservator complained that it was

> . . . significantly silent on the recent outrages and lawlessness of the South--thousands upon thousands of

> people of this country had anxiously awaited the message expecting that the President would administer, at least, a merited rebuke to the lawless elements of the country.[55]

Ida Wells' activities illustrated the political faith. "Throughout her life," her daughter observed, "she had great faith in the power of the ballot and worked unceasingly to stir citizens to register and vote."[56] In 1910, she published an article entitled "How Enfranchisement Stops Lynching."[57] In an early battle in the long crusade for a federal anti-lynching law, in 1898 she led a delegation to seek such legislation, among other things, from President McKinley. Also interested in woman's suffrage, in 1894 she joined efforts to elect a woman trustee of the University of Illinois. In 1913, she organized a black woman's suffrage group, the Alpha Suffrage Club, for which she edited a newsletter, the Alpha Suffrage Record. Thus she and other young Afro-American Agitators were entering a modern, secular, nationwide orbit of cultural experience, in which shifting governmental actions and amorphous, ephemeral public opinion became powerful sources of status and legitimacy to be courted for the race.

Parallel to the search for status and legitimacy from governmental acts was the Afro-American Agitators' concern about the fate of blacks in the arena of public opinion, especially as represented by agencies of mass communication, and their faith in protest and publicity as a means of courting favor. The Afro-American Agitators made themselves felt in the life of Chicago's black community by staging protest meetings at which they passed resolutions denouncing injustices to the race. Attorney John G. Jones called so many protest meetings that he became known as "Indignation" Jones, and Ferdinand Barnett, who often introduced resolutions, acquired the nickname "Resolutin' Ferd." The editors regarded their papers as weapons doing battle for the race in the forum of public opinion, and sometimes declared in their columns that blacks had an obligation to subscribe to these instruments of racial advancement. When the New York Globe, the leading black paper of the time, was forced to cut back its size, the Conservator decried the lack of support by the race for its most important national medium.[58]

The Appeal and the Conservator waged numerous and varied editorial campaigns in the battle for status and legitimacy for the race. In perhaps the earliest installment of a battle carried on by blacks for decades, in 1878 the Conservator complained of the failure of the general press to capitalize the word "Negro."[59] In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the American cultural arena was inhospitable to blacks, with the North's accession to the white South, the increasing popularity of racist doctrines, and the rise of the minstrel tradition, accompanied by the stereotype of the happy, carefree slave. In the Appeal, John Adams regularly assailed the increasingly popular theories of the Negro's biological inferiority, as well as the derivative ideas that blacks should not have been given the vote and should be limited to manual training. He also denounced the tendency of whites to stereotype blacks as uneducated and uncouth, and castigated the Associated Press for fostering the stereotype by reporting only the doings of lower-class blacks. Thus blacks, like other groups, were becoming increasingly conscious of the need to continually defend their group in the politicized battleground of culture, with the enlarged agencies of mass communication being principal arenas of the struggle.

The Afro-American Agitators' papers generally carried little reporting and much editorial commentary and discussion. Yet there were a few beginning signs of an awakening interest in facts and investigations. In 1890, the Conservator called upon the Afro-American League to conduct an investigation of conditions in Oklahoma to determine the suitability of the territory for migration by oppressed southern blacks.[60] The turn to the Progressives' faith in facts was best illustrated by Ida Wells, who filled her pamphlets with carefully gathered statistics and information on lynchings, and traveled to remote places to conduct investigations of injustices to blacks for many years. In one of her pamphlets, she wrote:

> The very frequent inquiry made after my lectures by interested friends is, "What can I do to help the cause?" The answer always is, "Tell the world the facts." When the Christian world knows the alarming growth and extent of outlawry in our land, some means will be found to stop it.[61]

The increasingly apparent injustices to the race, especially the rising tide of violence in the South, furnished the most potent symbol of the immorality of the age to the Afro-American Agitators. The Appeal constantly carried indignant expressions of moral outrage at lynchings, Jim Crow laws, and prejudice. "The whole South," John Adams warned, "has laid aside every principle of justice, honor, law and conscience and has with bared arms entered in upon a carnival of blood."[62] Southern whites, personified by the lynch mob, became potent symbols of evil in the militant papers. "Their valor would shame the brute. Theirs is the discretion of the devil," declared an editorial in the Conservator.[63]

Ida Wells' long crusade against lynching was the most visible example of the Afro-American Agitators' defiant response to southern violence. Later her approach was adopted and carried on more widely in the organized efforts of the NAACP, as the editorial campaigns in the Afro-American Agitators' small papers were copied in the far more widely circulated commercial mass press after the turn of the century. The Afro-American Agitators, however, established the rhetorical model, for in their editorial crusades they created a ritualistic morality play, in which the race confronted the villainous white South in a drama of racial identity and solidarity that would be carried on in the black press in the twentieth century.

The continuous coverage of injustice in the South in the militant papers illustrated the increased nationalization of consciousness among blacks, whose attention was shifting from local cultural arenas of churches and lodges to a nationwide orbit of shared racial experience. This development paralleled a general drift in the American consciousness in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when numerous Americans increasingly adopted a nationwide frame of reference.

The amateurish attempts at the collection of national "race news" in some of the Afro-American Agitators' papers illustrated the increasing nationalization of consciousness. The columns of news sent by correspondents and the clippings from other papers also illustrated the gradual turn from opinion to news as the mainstay of the papers. The Appeal carried columns of news sent by correspondents

in numerous cities, and a line in the masthead proclaimed the paper "A National Afro-American Newspaper." The presence of out-of-town black papers on the Chicago scene also revealed the beginning of a nationally circulated black press that was gradually turning the attention of remote black communities toward a common orbit of shared racial experience. Various out-of-town papers had Chicago agents to gather news and promote sales, with the New York Age and the Indianapolis Freeman most successfully cultivating the Chicago market. Although news-gathering may have been primitive and circulations modest by later standards, the papers were the precursors of the mass commercial papers with large national followings and staffs of professional reporters gathering "race news" in the twentieth century.

With their perception that the country had been transformed into a battleground of organized power blocs, the Afro-American Agitators displayed continual interest in organizing their own racial group. In 1887, T. Thomas Fortune of the New York Age called for the establishment of local Afro-American leagues, which appeared in numerous places, along with similar bodies called protective councils. In the Appeal, John Adams applauded these efforts at racial organization:

> Protective leagues seem to be springing up in all parts of the North. The Colored men are awaking to the fact that God only helps him who helps himself.[64]

Fortune later proposed the formation of a national Afro-American League to be built on the foundation of the local groups, and the first national meeting convened in Chicago in 1890. Like several other young editors, Ferdinand Barnett was active in the event, signing the call to the meeting, serving on the local committee to make preparations, and acting as temporary secretary at the conference.[65] The league was not destined to achieve important gains, and in 1893 Fortune proclaimed it dead. It was revived in 1898 as the National Afro-American Council and continued to meet annually until 1908.

Numerous other ventures illustrated the mounting drive to organize. In 1881, about 20 editors responded to John Adams' call to attend the first meeting of the National Afro-American Press Association in the Conservator office. Although critics repeatedly

assailed the organization as moribund, it continued to draw editors from scattered parts of the country to its annual meetings throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Ida Wells toured the country in an effort to organize local anti-lynching leagues. She also was a leading promoter of the beginning black woman's club movement and organized the first black woman's club in Chicago. Miss Wells was among the black leaders active in the attempt to organize the National Colored People's Protective Association during the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.[66]

There was a paradox in the enthusiasm for organization, however. As the Afro-American Agitators favored secularization but sought to preserve a moralistic way of life in their style of "secular piety," so they favored organization to battle the other organized power blocs in the land but also wanted to preserve individualistic values. Often staunch moralists and individualists, editors like John Adams gave a highly personal and forceful tone to their editorial pages, in a pattern already departed in mainstream white journalism. Intensely moralistic, Ida Wells constantly implored herself in her diary to lead a right life and scolded herself for transgressions.

Richard Hofstadter has suggested that many reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suffered uneasiness in the face of the rise of an organized society and sought to preserve individualistic values in an age of organization.[67] The characterization aptly fits the Afro-American Agitators, who sought to preserve moral values associated with local life and a religious outlook in an age of national organization and the secularization of consciousness. Thus they were pioneers in perceiving and reacting to a central cultural dilemma of modern life--the tension between older ideals of individualism and the apparent possibility of their realization in a society dominated by organized institutions. As John William Ward and Cushing Strout have argued, this tension has animated much of American life in the twentieth century.[68] In recent years, it has poignantly surfaced in the rebellion of numerous individualists against institutions, and a dramatic image of individuals struggling against institutions has become a sort of ideology of many Americans.

The political and racial advancement programs of the Afro-

American Agitators were part of a broader process of cultural reconstruction, as blacks like many other Americans sought to slough off outmoded traditions and to devise new styles of life for the new world arising around them.[69] Like other Americans, blacks contemplated, tried, and promulgated various new life style models, resulting in some clashes among the partisans of rival alternatives. The eventual outcome would be the rise to dominance in middle-class black life of twentieth-century, urban-based, progressive life styles and the toppling of nineteenth-century genteel customs.

For all of their interest in politics, Ida Wells and the Adams brothers also exemplified the efforts of numerous blacks to use journalism as a vehicle for the promotion of a new, proud, moralistic middle-class style of life. In its later years, the Appeal deteriorated in the range and quality of its content, but in the early days the Adams brothers were pioneers in the introduction of secular community papers with race news, illustrations, and informational and cultural features. The paper carried character sketches of leading blacks, book reviews, church and lodge news, a woman's column, society column, and advice column. A few other papers, such as the Indianapolis Freeman, and the short-lived secular magazines beginning in the late 1880's were even more conspicuous examples of the drive to make the black press into a showcase for the expression and celebration of a new world of secular middle-class black life--a drive that would be implemented far more successfully by the commercial mass press in the twentieth century.[70]

The promotion of a respectable middle-class life style and a concern about home life, education, and standards of conduct and morality were more characteristic concerns of the rising coterie of black women journalists than of the men. Unlike Ida Wells, most of the women eschewed the political debates of the men in what T. Thomas Fortune called the "press gang." As a contemporary said of Miss Wells, "She reaches the men by dealing with the political aspect of the race question, and the women she meets around the fireside."[71] However, the concerns of the men and the women were interrelated parts of the common cultural enterprise of building a proud and independent middle-class style of life. In bridging the chasm

commonly separating the sexes, Miss Wells personified, perhaps better than any other journalist of her time, the spirit of the rising black middle class.

In 1888, Miss Wells joined the staff of one of the short-lived cultural magazines. She had been a columnist for Rev. William J. Simmons' American Baptist for two years when Simmons decided to switch to a secular publication and brought out Our Women and Children. The magazine carried 32 pages of features on women, home life, religion, education, and other subjects, but it reached a circulation of only 1,500 and died after a year. In 1894, Miss Wells was a contributor to the first issue of another brief venture, Brock's Magazine.[72]

There were important differences among the women journalists of the time, including a division between northerners and southerners. Nevertheless, the writings of many of them, like the spirit of the black woman's club movement of the 1890's, entailed a self-conscious concern with social life, standards of conduct, the home, the improvement of the race, and the public image of the black woman. The women often saw themselves as stigmatized by the public image of the slave woman without morality and felt an absence of usable traditions to furnish a dignified role for themselves. The spurt of enthusiasm for writing represented a collective enterprise of establishing an ennobling role for the black woman and promulgating a respectable middle-class style of life for the race.

In a display of the concerns and motivations common among the women journalists, much of Ida Wells' early writing was directed toward the promotion of her standards of conduct for her race. Comments in her diary revealed that she felt driven to write and that she tried to write fiction. Her drive to write of social life and human relations reflected her immersion in a collective expressive process of building, celebrating, defending, and promoting a middle-class style of life.

While numerous blacks were promoting a new style of life, their preferred ideals varied, and sometimes there were marked inconsistencies in the outlook of one individual. Ida Wells and John Adams often encouraged distinctly middle-class programs for racial advancement, but also had much sympathy for the liberal integrationist

ideals, faith in political action, and enthusiasm for literary and intellectual culture favored by the Talented Tenth. Later the split between the middle class and the elitists of the Talented Tenth would surface in the open conflict between the factions of blacks aligned behind Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois in the early years of the twentieth century. The Afro-American Agitators of the 1880's and 1890's divided in the Washington-DuBois controversy, and many of them had conflicting sentiments about it.

In Chicago, the young professionals of the 1870's, 1880's, and 1890's were a conspicuous example of the Talented Tenth's enthusiasm for elite culture. After Ferdinand Barnett again took charge of the Conservator in 1887, the paper's office became a center for their political discussions, and about the same time the Prudence Crandall Club became a center for their cultural activities.[73] Self-consciously sloughing off what they saw as the ignorance, servility, and backwardness of their parents' generation, the young professionals prized excellence in prestigious professional careers and promoted secular knowledge, culture, and education to displace other-worldliness.

In a newspaper article written in the mid-seventies, Barnett urged blacks to form literary societies to enhance the knowledge and culture of the race, for the improvement of "our standard of mental and moral excellence" was the best route to the elevation of "our social status as a race."[74] About the time of his graduation from high school in 1874, Barnett was president of the Golden Link Society, an organization of young blacks who gathered to hear essays and debates. Later he headed the music and art section of the Prudence Crandall Club.

Another leader of the club was Fannie Barrier Williams, a frequent newspaper columnist and the wife of Barnett's law partner, who had studied art in several studios and the New England Conservatory after she graduated from college. In an interview with a Chicago Tribune reporter in 1888, she complained of the tendency of whites to stereotype all blacks as backward, superstitious, and excessively attached to other-worldly ideas. The members of the Prudence Crandall Club, she claimed, were "freethinkers" interested in science, literature, and culture.[75]

One difference between the elitists of the Talented Tenth and the rising middle class centered on their attitudes toward integration. The middle class was increasingly promoting separate racial institutions, while the elitists generally opposed such institutions and called for the integration of blacks into white institutions. The Conservator constantly encouraged blacks to challenge discrimination in restaurants, theaters, and other public places and steadfastly opposed segregated schools, which some blacks reluctantly favored as a way of gaining positions for black teachers. Like a number of leaders, Ida Wells was somewhat torn by this conflict within the race. Although she was a leader in challenging segregation and discrimination, she also encouraged some separate self-help programs for blacks, which, to her surprise, some members of the Talented Tenth opposed.[76]

The growing split between separatists and integrationists surfaced in the divided chorus of protests by blacks about their exclusion from the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. Bitter complaints about the obvious attempts to exclude blacks from participation began in 1890, when President Harrison named an all-white National Board of Commissioners to oversee the celebration. "The policy of the Fair people has been to exclude the colored people from every place of honor," complained the Conservator, which was continually in the forefront of the protest.[77]

The Conservator acted as the spokesman for one of the two rival black groups seeking to influence the fair's white overseers. One faction sought a special department or pavilion for black exhibits at the fair, while the group aligned with the Conservator favored efforts to attract black exhibits to be placed in appropriate departments throughout the fair. The blacks assembled at a mass meeting in 1890 supported the latter position in adopting a resolution presented by Ferdinand Barnett. However, the Board of Commissioners followed neither course, deciding against a separate exhibit but declining to encourage black participation through the regular channels. Black women in Chicago formed two separate organizations, representing the contending points of view, to press for participation in women's activities, with Barnett as advisor and the Conservator as spokesman for the group seeking integrated participation. However, the women

were snubbed by the fair's Board of Lady Managers, headed by the aristocratic Chicago society leader Mrs. Potter Palmer, who named a white woman from Kentucky to represent the black women and pointed to dissension among them as an excuse for excluding them from the preparations.[78]

The Conservator demanded the appointment of blacks to publicize the fair among the race, including a prominent editor to send publicity to black newspapers. R. P. Bird of the Conservator staff, state Representative Edward H. Morris, and others presented a resolution to the Board of Control and secured an appearance before the board by Morris and Fannie Barrier Williams. The Conservator had been promoting Mrs. Williams for a publicity post, and after her appearance the board decided to offer her a position. However, the idea was soon scrubbed, apparently because of objections from the rival faction of black women. Fair officials did name a black stenographer to send publicity to the black press, but the Conservator complained that the appointment should have gone to an editor.[79]

Ida Wells and Frederick Douglass proposed the publication of a pamphlet, for distribution to foreign visitors at the fair, to describe the progress of the race since the Civil War, detail the injustices suffered by the race, and explain the absence of black exhibits at the fair as due to American prejudice. In a letter distributed for publication in black papers, they explained the plan and called for contributions. Several leading papers supported the project, but it came under fire in the widely read Indianapolis Freeman and a number of other papers, which claimed that it would be a waste of money, would accomplish nothing, and would place blacks in a demeaning position.[80]

Douglass wanted to abandon the project, but Miss Wells proposed a more modest publication and set out to raise money through personal solicitation and benefits in black churches. With many Chicago blacks eagerly supporting the project, and assistance from other women in arranging the programs of music and speeches, funds were quickly raised to pay for the 20,000 pamphlets distributed in the final three months of the fair.[81]

Entitled The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition, the 81-page pamphlet contained chapters

by Douglass, Miss Wells, I. Garland Penn, and Ferdinand Barnett. It captured the spirit of black sentiment toward the fair. The "White City" of temporary buildings was a paean to the wonders of technology, a symbol of the smug pride of an industrial society as it marveled at its own progress. However, to blacks, it symbolized the moral failure of an organized commercial society that had foresaken its ideals in its heady rush for material progress. The preface to the pamphlet declared that while the fair displayed America's progress in the arts and sciences, "that which would best illustrate her moral grandeur has been ignored."[82]

Later in the decade, numerous blacks joined the outraged whites who assailed the cult of power and materialism and the demise of morality in the land symbolized by American imperialism in the Spanish-American War. The war aroused considerable interest among blacks. In the 1890's, blacks were beginning to express solidarity with non-white populations abroad and to link their own struggle with events on the worldwide racial front. When the independence movement broke out in Cuba in the mid-nineties, blacks widely took up the call "Cuba Libre." In 1896, Ferdinand and Ida Barnett participated in a program to support Cuban independence and to mourn the death of the fallen rebel leader, Antonio Maceo.[83] As America moved into the war with Spain, blacks called for black participation and enthusiastically supported the effort to liberate the non-white populations in the Spanish possessions.

Black attitudes toward the war began to sour in the face of attempts to exclude blacks from officers' posts, and much of the black press took up a "no officers, no fight" campaign. With the close of the war, as America's imperialistic designs upon the former Spanish possessions became apparent in the United States efforts to suppress the native independence movements, some blacks became outspoken opponents of American policy. Quickly linking America's effort to subjugate non-white populations abroad with the mounting racial violence at home, Ida Barnett and other militants took up imperialism as well as homefront injustices in a crescendo of protests. Mrs. Barnett was among the speakers at a protest meeting in Chicago in November 1898 at which resolutions opposing imperialism and denouncing the recent violence in the Carolinas were adopted. In an address on mob

violence to the Afro-American Council the next month, she condemned imperialism and the inaction of the McKinley Administration in the recent Wilmington race riot.[84]

The World's Fair furnished an occasion for a show of the mounting antagonism of middle-class blacks toward the lower class. When officials announced a "Colored American Day" at the fair, the Conservator and numerous other papers condemned the plan as degrading, and many Chicago blacks voiced their opposition in protest meetings, statements, and resolutions. Ida Wells was a leading opponent of the event from the time it was announced. In view of past neglect by fair officials, she declared in a column, blacks "are far too self-respecting to seize the crumb thrown at the last moment."[85]

As the event drew nearer, Miss Wells wrote a letter to the New York Age, which was widely and approvingly quoted in black papers, in which she gave credence to a rumor that free watermelons would be offered to entice blacks to attend. To Miss Wells and other promoters of the life style of "refined and cultured Afro-Americans" as a racial standard, the event appeared to be a ceremony of recognition for the stereotype of the backward, ignorant Negro. This concern illustrated that the Afro-American Agitators thought of themselves as engaged in a propaganda war to win public recognition of their life style as the standard for the race in place of degrading stereotypes and lower-class habits. Miss Wells complained that

> . . . the spectacle of the class of our people which will come on that excursion roaming around the grounds munching watermelons, will do more to lower the race in the estimation of the world than anything else. The sight of the horde that would be attracted there by the dazzling prospect of plenty of free watermelons to eat, will give our enemies all the illustration they wish as excuse for not treating the Afro-American with the equality of other citizens.[86]

The concern about life styles and public images of the race led the Afro-American Agitators into two interrelated battles, both continued by middle-class blacks in the twentieth century. On the one hand, they sought to differentiate themselves from the lower class in the eyes of the wider society and reacted vehemently against the wider society's failure to recognize the distinction between them and the shiftless lower-class blacks of popular stereotypes. In this battle,

they sought white acceptance of themselves and displayed an elitist tendency, often resented by other blacks, to segregate themselves from their less respectable racial brethren. Ida Wells repeatedly urged respectable blacks to draw the line between themselves and the unrespectable. "If we do not draw the line between the respectable and the scum of the city," she wrote in the Free Speech, "can we wonder that white people don't do it?"[87]

At the same time, in a display of another side of their elitism, the Afro-American Agitators constantly sought to uplift other blacks to their own style of "secular piety." As they increasingly looked to the race as a symbolic entity representative of themselves, a benchmark for identity in the nationwide industrial order, they became intent upon promoting their own life style as an ideal for emulation by the entire race. The Appeal constantly assailed lower-class blacks, who "live disreputable lives and yet expect the respect of respectable people."[88]

Ferdinand Barnett shared his wife's elitism, and under him the Conservator promoted the Afro-American Agitators' elitist objectives and customs. When a critic attacked the elite for snobbery and exclusiveness, the paper indignantly defended the elite's rigid maintenance of its "exalted sphere of social exclusiveness" and insisted that blacks must not "mingle freely, good, bad and indifferent, all in one motley mass."[89]

Barnett looked to educated youth to uplift the race. At a conference of black leaders, he declared, "We must not fail to notice any dereliction of our educated people. They must learn that their duty is to elevate their less favored brethren."[90] Barnett despised the conduct and life style of the black masses, which he associated with ignorance, superstition, immorality, improvidence, and a lack of ambition for success and self-improvement. He thought it was the duty of the educated elite to inculcate bourgeois worldly ambition, self-discipline, and morality. This was an aim of the Conservator under him, as he remarked in an interview late in his life:

> When the paper was started the behavior of many of the Negroes was characterized by loose living and a lack of proper standards. There were few Negroes of culture and refinement, and only a few jobs of any consequence were held by Negroes. The paper was devoted to the idea of

stressing the importance of education, social uplift and correct living.[91]

These attitudes put blacks like the Barnetts in step with the rising Progressive movement of white professionals attempting to establish themselves as arbiters of culture and seeking legitimacy for their own standards of taste and morality in the expanded and culturally diverse urban world. Like many Americans who nervously surveyed the growing urban centers, the Conservator's editors saw as the greatest looming threat to the respectable style of life the burgeoning "sporting world" that lured young people into vice and indecent behavior. The paper inveighed against the "young scapegraces, who stand upon the street corners and disgrace their parents and themselves by their ruffianly conduct."[92] In another typical show of alarm, it declared, "We very sorrowfully call attention to the fact, that a number of our young girls and boys are on the road to ruin."[93]

The Appeal regularly condemned a wide range of emerging urban customs, including jazz music, the cake walk, smoking, and boxing, which the paper called "brutal," "demoralizing," and "disgraceful." This fear of cultural developments on the urban scene was similar to that of middle-class whites whose anxieties surfaced in the temperance drive, muckraking, and other movements. In the eyes of both middle-class blacks and whites, a society of large-scale organizations and invading lower-class and immigrant populations threatened the individualistic morality of an earlier middle-class style of life. Thus, in expanding urban black communities, as throughout the industrial city, a continuing cultural war was becoming increasingly endemic in community life.

Like the white Progressives alarmed at the rise of the Yellow Press, some of the Afro-American Agitators turned their fears about culture upon mass media that they perceived as agents in the spread and legitimation of unworthy styles of life. Ida Wells condemned the "trashy literature" in the monthly magazines increasingly being read by blacks.[94] John Adams feared "the demoralizing effects of the numerous moving picture shows that infest the country."[95] Later the antagonism toward mass media as promoters of despised life styles would focus upon some black media as well. As the commercial black

press of the twentieth century employed sensationalism in its search for a mass following, it drew censure from middle-class blacks similar to the attacks upon tabloids by respectable whites in the 1920's.

In the midst of the Afro-American Agitators' political crusades and their attempts at cultural uplift, a black business class was rapidly rising in Chicago and other urban communities. Some Afro-American Agitators enthusiastically supported black commercial development as a route to independence for the race. Others, however, like so many whites, were alarmed at the increasing acceptance of money as the only badge of individual worth and status in the urban-industrial social order. The Conservator criticized social affairs open to anyone able to pay the admission price.[96] Ida Wells, her daughter noted, "felt that the upper class should consist of persons of refinement, good breeding, and good manners. Thus, she resented the entrance of persons of questionable morals who had enough money to pay their way into society."[97]

With these developments, in urban black communities as throughout the urban-industrial society, the status order of nineteenth-century genteel elites--whose badge of membership had been taste, morality, and an entire way of life--was being eclipsed by a modern impersonal status order founded upon achieved criteria.[98] In this process, as in so many respects, the Afro-American Agitators were transition figures between nineteenth-century and twentieth-century styles of life. Although they defended the genteel culture of the old elite, with their stress upon professional achievement they also were harbingers of modern impersonal criteria of status. With the rise of the black business class, some members of old black elites joined the awakened protest movement of the Race Radicals, rallying around W. E. B. DuBois in the open controversy with the business class and its leader, Booker T. Washington, in the first decade of the twentieth century.[99] The Afro-American Agitators divided in the Washington-DuBois controversy, but eventually the controversy subsided anyway, in part because the factions were drawn together by their common hostility toward the expanded lower class on the urban scene with the wave of migration from the South.

Like some other waves of protest journalism, the Afro-American

Agitators' crusades arose in the midst of rapid social change and secularization, as the young militants made "secular religions" out of the causes that they espoused. Moreover, like some other reformers, as their aspirations to lead and uplift their race were dashed, they had to realize that the race was not behind them. Although they were the authors of the idea of racial organization, they were not very successful in implementing it. Their plans for the race were realized later by the professional politicians and racial advancement workers who soon overshadowed them, as their small crusading newspapers were soon overshadowed by the commercial mass press. The Afro-American Agitators, however, provided many of the plans and rhetorical models that helped to weld black Americans into a group with a shared racial allegiance and a shared body of symbolic experience, much of it spread by the black press, in the twentieth century.

1. Albert Kreiling, "The Rise of the Black Press in Chicago," Journalism History, v. 4 (Winter 1977-1978), pp. 132-136, 156; "The Making of Racial Identities in the Black Press: A Cultural Analysis of Race Journalism in Chicago, 1878-1929," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1973, pp. 101-225.

2. The appearance of the professionals in Chicago and their rise to leadership in the social elite are described in Fenton Johnson, "Chicago Negro Aristocrats," ms. in Illinois Writers Project, Carter G. Woodson Library, Chicago. The role of the professionals as a distinctive group in black history generally is discussed in Edward A. Shils, "The Bases of Social Stratification in Negro Society," ms. in Carnegie-Myrdal Study, New York, 1940, Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.

3. On Barnett, see Albert Nelson Marquis (ed.), The Book of Chicagoans (Chicago, 1917), p. 37; James B. Bradwell, "The Colored Bar of Chicago," Chicago Legal News, v. 29 (October 31, 1896), p. 149; Ralph Nelson Davis, "The Negro Newspaper in Chicago," M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1939, pp. 9-28; Harold F. Gosnell, Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), pp. 85, 206, and passim; Allan H. Spear, Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 58-61 and passim. My characterization of Barnett and the Conservator also is heavily dependent upon interviews with his daughter, Mrs. Alfreda M. Duster of Chicago, and a study of his scrapbook in her possession.

4. On Ida B. Wells, see Ida B. Wells, Crusade for Justice, ed. Alfreda M. Duster (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Ida B. Wells-Barnett, On Lynchings (New York: Arno Press, 1969); Mary

Magdelene Boone Hutton, "The Rhetoric of Ida B. Wells: The Genesis of the Anti-lynch Movement," Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1975; David M. Tucker, "Miss Ida B. Wells and Memphis Lynching," Phylon, v. 32 (Summer 1971), pp. 112-122; I. Garland Penn, The Afro-American Press and Its Editors (Springfield, Mass.: Willey, 1891), pp. 407-410. Again, in understanding Ida B. Wells, I am heavily dependent upon conversations with her daughter, Mrs. Alfreda M. Duster.

5. On John Adams, see St. Paul Appeal, September 9, 16, 1922; Henry Davenport Northrop, Joseph R. Gay, and I. Garland Penn, The College of Life or Practical Self-Educator: A Manual of Self-Improvement for the Colored Race (Chicago: Chicago Publication and Lithograph Co., 1895), pp. 134-135; Penn, Afro-American Press, pp. 237-240. On Cyrus Adams, see "Cyrus Field Adams," Colored American Magazine, v. 1 (September 1900), pp. 236-237; Daniel Murray, "Cyrus Field Adams, Assistant Register of the United States Treasury," Colored American Magazine, v. 4 (December 1901), pp. 149-153; Spear, Black Chicago, p. 80.

6. St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1945), pp. 48, 506-507, 543, and passim; E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), pp. 88-89.

7. Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., "Repercussions of Reconstruction: The Northern Negro, 1870-1883," Civil War History, v. 14 (December 1968), pp. 334, 343.

8. Free Speech quoted in Indianapolis Freeman, March 19, 1892.

9. Free Speech quoted in New York Age, September 12, 1891.

10. For example, Conservator, September 8, 1883; Conservator quoted in New York Globe, February 16, 1884.

11. Clipping in Barnett scrapbook.

12. Frederick Douglass to Editor of the Conservator, c. May 1889, in Douglass Papers, Library of Congress.

13. On Clark, see Conservator, December 18, 1886; Cleveland Gazette, March 24, 1888; New Orleans Weekly Pelican, August 13, 1887; New York Freeman, October 17, 1885, November 27, 1886, January 29, February 12, 1887; William J. Simmons, Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive, and Rising (Cleveland, 1887), pp. 1097-1100; Herbert Aptheker (ed.), A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States (New York: Citadel Press, 1951), v. 2, pp. 651-652; Rev. J. W. Laws, Oration on the Life of Hon. Alexander Clark (n.p., 1891), in Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.

14. Weekly Pelican, August 13, 1887.

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68. John William Ward, "The Ideal of Individualism and the Reality of Organization," in Ward, Red, White, and Blue: Men, Books, and Ideas in American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 227-266; Cushing Strout, "Individuals Well Organized," in Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner (eds.), The Development of an American Culture (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 219-235.

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70. I have discussed this trend in black magazines in "The Rise of Black Consumer Magazines: The Case of the Half-Century," convention paper, Association for Education in Journalism, Boston, August 1980.

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85. Typescript of column, "The Reign of Mob Law," Age, February 18, 1893, in Wells Papers.

86. Age quoted in Call, July 15, 1893.

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90. Barnett, "Race Unity," p. 464.

91. Interview with Ralph Davis quoted in St. Clair Drake, Churches and Voluntary Associations in the Chicago Negro Community (mim., Chicago: Work Projects Administration, 1940), p. 78.

92. Clipping in Barnett scrapbook.

93. Ibid.

94. New York Freeman, August 13, 1887.

95. Appeal, July 9, 1910.

96. Clipping in Barnett scrapbook.

97. Duster, "Introduction," p. xxvi.

98. I have discussed this development more fully in "The Rise of Black Consumer Magazines," pp. 6-9.

99. The best analysis of this controversy is presented by August Meier. See especially his "Negro Class Structure and Ideology in the Age of Booker T. Washington," Phylon, v. 23 (Fall 1962), pp. 258-266; and Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 161-255.